The Chronicle and Index

OF THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

No. 58, Vol. v.] BELFAST, OCTOBER 1st, 1885. [For Gratuitous Circulation.

THE Rev. J. C. Street acknowledges with thanks the following contribution in aid of the gratuitous publication and circulation of the *Chronicle and Index*:—Mrs. Watson, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 20/-.

THE Rev. Edgar Solly Anthony, M.A., has received and accepted a cordial invitation to the ministry of the Remonstrant Congregation of Raloo. We trust Mr. Solly may have a happy and successful ministry.

WITH this month the various activities of our churches, which have been partially suspended during the summer months, will be resumed, and the pulpit and class-room will be vigorously occupied by those who are zealous for the well-being and progress of mankind. Holidays will now be over, and the renewed health gained by rest and change will be consecrated to the noblest service. We cordially bid God-speed to all the workers, and trust that much good will result from their labours.

THE Rev. J. C. Street will resume his Sunday Evening Lectures on the first Sunday in the present month. His opening subject is, "Another Step Farther in Advance." We hope that, as usual for many years past, these lectures will command the presence of large audiences, and that much good will result from them.

EARLY in this month the British and Foreign Unitarian Association will hold its Autumnal Conference at Nottingham, where the representatives will be sure of a hearty reception by the congregations worshipping at High Pavement and Pease Hill Chapels. The Unitarians of Nottingham are numerous and influential, and we have no doubt they will take such steps as will secure a good meeting and lead to substantial results.

THE Annual Meetings of the Scottish Unitarian Association are to be held in Glasgow in the middle of the present month. The Rev. Frank Walters, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, is to be the preacher. His appearance in his old pulpit is sure to be heartily welcomed, and his helpful words will spur on the workers of the North to renewed efforts and deeper consecration. The Unitarian Society of Belfast is invited to send a representative to the meetings, and no doubt the invitation will be accepted.

NELSON STREET PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

YESTERDAY morning, Sept. 27th, the Rev. J. C. Street delivered a sermon in connection with the Temperance Jubilee, in the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Nelson Street, Newcastle. The rev. gentleman chose for the subject of his discourse the following texts:—"A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation . . ."—Isaiah. lx. 22. ". . . Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"—James iii. 5. At the outset the preacher paid a touching tribute to the memory of the late Alderman Charlton. The temperance movement, he said, like all great reformations, had had a very small beginning. It had been commenced in a cockpit at Preston, more than fifty years ago, by a small band of humble workers, who, seeing the misery that drink was producing in their homes, and how it was darkening the households of millions of their countrymen, resolved to have nothing to

do with it. They were styled fanatics, the newspapers laughed at them, the pulpit did not regard them for a long time; but the movement to which they gave birth had produced wonderful results. It had spread throughout Christendom, and the hearts of the enfranchised millions throughout eternity would thank God for the birth of the great temperance revolution.

The appearance of the Rev. J. C. Street in a Methodist Pulpit is surely a good sign of growing toleration.

THE Annual Sermons in connexion with the Northumberland and Durham Unitarian Christian Association were preached before numerous congregations on Sunday, September 27th, morning and evening, by the President of the Association, the Rev. Frank Walters. The subjects of the rev. gentleman's discourses were, "The Religion of Humanity" and "The Power of the Word made Flesh." In the afternoon a juvenile temperance service, which was largely attended, also took place in the church. The devotional portion of the service was conducted by Mr. I. M. Wade, of London; and the Rev. J. C. Street, of Belfast; a former pastor of the church, who was on a visit to the district, delivered an earnest and eloquent address on the subject of temperance. The anniversary proceedings were continued on the following day. A conference of the members and friends of the associations was held in the afternoon, at which various matters of interest were considered. The annual soiree and meeting afterwards took place. The Rev. Frank Walters presided at the meeting. The annual report, which on the whole was of a satisfactory character, was presented and adopted, and interesting addresses were delivered by the Rev. J. C. Street, Rev. H. Williamson (Dundee), Mr. I. M. Wade, Mr. A. W. Grant (Glasgow), and several ministers and laymen connected with the Unitarian body in the district. During the evening the choir, under the leadership of Councillor Barker Ellis, rendered several anthems, and solos were given by Mrs. Shepherd and Mr. White.

A CONFERENCE of Sunday School teachers, and others interested in Sunday School work, was held at Comber on the last Sunday in August. A number of friends from Belfast, Moneyrea, Killinchy, and other places were present, and were kindly received by Rev. Mr. Dunkerley and the Comber people. Among those present were—Rev. A. Lancaster, Rev. Thomas Dunkerley, B.A.; Rev. J. C. Street, and Messrs. Jas. Darbishire, Bulmer, M'Calmont, Bennett, A. K. Stewart, Moore, A. Spackman, S. Miller, Blakely Orr, R. Simpson, James Milling, James Davidson, A. Shields, J. Boyd, David Munn, and W. W. Drummond.

Mr. Darbishire, President of the Sunday School Association, having been called to the chair, the proceedings were opened by a hymn and prayer.

After a few words from the Chairman, the Rev. A. Lancaster, of Killinchy, read the following paper, entitled—

HONOURS IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

The subject on which I am to speak this afternoon is to me, as no doubt it is to you, an entirely new one. As I begin to write upon it I have but the vaguest idea of how to proceed, what to say, and where to end. I anticipate your sharp criticisms, and even your *censures*, at my daring to bring before you something unusual, and for suggesting several new departures from the usual course of Sunday School procedures. However, I shall try to bear all your stripes with patience and forbearance like a good Christian.

There is one word, however, in the title of this paper that gives me encouragement and hope to expect your sympathy in what I have to say, and that word is *honour*. You will no doubt agree with me that if our Sunday Schools exist for the purpose of training the young to be good and virtuous, they cannot do this without also training them to be honourable in everything they do. There is nothing we love so much as to see honour prevailing amongst the young. When exercised by the young it is far more attractive, and of greater worth, than when exercised by older people. For if we can early train the inward conscious-

ness of right, justice, and integrity, and that love of moral worth to take pre-eminence in the lives of the young, then we may be assured that there is better promise than otherwise of a good, an upright and a noble life succeeding. Our Sunday Schools, I take it, exist for the encouragement and the cultivation of these high and noble qualities in the hearts and lives of the young. And when we see genuine worth in a young person, such as we could only expect from one of riper years, are we not all of us, I will not say *merely tempted*, but anxious and desirous to reward such nobleness either by praise or by some merited gift? And do we not believe that this is due from us as a kind of stimulus and encouragement for the young to reach after even higher attainments? Such I think is a prevailing system, acted upon everywhere by all who love virtue, righteousness and religion. Since this course, therefore, is somewhat adopted already, although perhaps not very widely, if I venture to advocate the extension of this scheme of bestowing honours, and plead for its universal adoption in our Sunday Schools, perhaps I may not be thought so far astray after all.

I have said that the practice of bestowing honours was not widely adopted, but in saying this I was alluding more especially to Sunday Schools. When we leave Sunday Schools and turn our eyes elsewhere, we are met at every turn in life with this very same plan. In every department of education, political service to one's country, in every rank in army and navy, in various professions and voluntary offices, this course of bestowing honours obtains. And with, it may be, a few exceptions our countrymen in general approve of the course pursued. Of course we all know that some worthy deed, some good service, or some high attainments must precede the receiving of these honours. And we further believe that this has a salutary effect on society in general, and that its tendency is to encourage and to foster a love of high achievements in every social, political, moral and religious undertaking. That this is the case, we need only look how the possibility of gaining honours encourages collegiate students to work, soldiers to observe their officers' commands and to care more for good conduct than personal pleasure, and men of different professions to engage in further research and discovery. In each case not only is the individual better for his honour, but the nation is a gainer in many ways by the results of that individual's labours.

So I believe would it be in the Sunday School. If a system of honours were established, not only would the scholars who gained them be better, but the school in general would be better, inasmuch as another link of good character, or sterling worth, would be introduced into the school, thereby showing what the final aim of the Sunday School was. If this final aim could always be kept prominently before the minds of the young, and encouragements were held out to all who strive to reach the goal, then I think our schools would accomplish greater good than they do at present.

The greatest difficulty is, for what shall honours be bestowed, and what form shall the honours take? Yes, this is the difficulty, and it is here that I come to the most trying part of my subject. It is here where what I have called a "new departure" comes in. Hitherto we have been confined to giving prizes for attendance or for good conduct in school. We have somehow seen nothing else to have rewards for, unless some teachers have indulged in giving rewards for proficiency in lessons. These are all very good in their way. But we must remember that we not only require attention, good conduct, and well learnt lessons, but we also wish to take the youngest child by the hand, lead it gently onward through the various stages of the school, until it reach the highest eminence therein, and all this while holding its hand even when no longer a child but a young man or a young woman. But more than this we desire to do with it. We desire to engage the youngest heart and soul in the first and simplest lessons of morality and religion, and making these subjects as attractive as possible, we desire to still hold the young soul captive as it grows older year by year, leading it through the various lessons of morality, conscientiousness, love of truth, devotional exercises, prayerful feelings and religious aspira-

tions, until we feel we have done all we can in helping it to gain that level of humanity where it will find itself in company with all good and true and noble souls that have struggled through life's temptations and trials, and where it shall see the way, though not clear, yet definitely marked out, in which it can march onward and finally shake hands with Jesus himself. This is our greatest purpose with the children who enter the doors of our Sunday Schools. We wish, once we have lain our hands on their shoulders and bid them welcome, never to lose sight of them again nor allow them to slip away from our grasp.

Now I maintain that we have not sufficient encouragements in our schools to retain our scholars from the lowest class until they have entered the highest. It is only a very poor enticement for continuous attendance to offer them a book of the value of a couple of shillings once every six or twelve months. And unless they have some compulsory force behind them, in the form of parents who *will have them attend*, there are very few who would otherwise be attracted to pass *through* the school by a yearly or half-yearly prize. And in speaking thus, I am not about to advocate the giving of a larger amount of money. In the first place we cannot afford it; and in the second place it would not be conducive of any greater results. But perhaps we could adopt other means of rewarding attendance that might be better thought of.

In looking around for something to take the place of or to supplement reward books, I have been attracted by the honours which some other societies confer upon their members. And with the societies I here allude to, these honours are worn at any extraordinary meeting, and at anniversaries, processions, &c., &c. You will no doubt conclude within yourselves that I allude to such societies as the Good Templars, the Rechabites, sick and burial societies, and others. In these societies they not only have what they term "regalia" in the form of scarfs of various materials, but they also have a gradual official promotion. I propose to deal with both these ideas in connection with our schools.

First—"regalia." No doubt you have noticed that this forms a great attraction to enter societies such as I have mentioned. There is something in these insignia that at once catches the eye and rouses a feeling of interest. Many a young man has no doubt been thus led to join the "Good Templars'" Society, and has no doubt been all the better for it. And my contention is this, that since there is nothing unseemly in this dress, and since it answers a purpose which perhaps nothing else would, why should not Sunday Schools make use of them as well as other societies? You do already make use of your Sunday School banners, which idea, if I am not greatly mistaken, was also borrowed from such "clubs" as the "Ancient Order of Foresters;" and therefore I say, why not borrow another idea elsewhere? I think there is not another society besides the Sunday School that could attach such dignity and purity to an outward observance of this kind. Perhaps there are some who, hearing this, would be inclined to remark that it is only like holding out a bait to a fish, or a piece of red rag to a bull. But I would remind you that this is already done in nearly everything that goes on in the life of a nation, *e.g.*, it is the large salary that attracts to certain professions; the red coat that brings in the recruit; and even in the Sunday School your rewards also act in the same way to a certain degree. In all seriousness, I believe that if this idea were carried out it would increase the number of our scholars. Our aim is to get the scholars by any fair and legitimate means, and when we have them there to do them good in every way.

I must not linger too long over this, but leave it now for your gentle or rough criticisms. I now pass on to consider "official promotion." I think that here a great improvement might be made. The young, when they reach the age of 18 or 20 years, aspire to something more than to be mere passive materials on which the school operates. And nothing pleases them so much as to have some little office committed to their trust. I would therefore strongly advocate that after a certain age, and after a certain number of years' connection with the Sunday School, every scholar, especially the boys, should have some work to do for the

school. I do not advocate it so much for the girls (although I think something might even be found for them to do), for I believe that if the boys can be kept at our schools, the girls (and I say this with all due respect to them, and I also think it redounds to their *honour,)* will not give us very much trouble until after they are married, and then we generally lose them. I would therefore suggest, in order to keep our boys at school, the formation of—well, I don't like to call it an "inner circle," because that term is associated with what is vile and atrocious—and yet it expresses my idea—the formation of what we may at present call "An Elder Scholars' Governing Union," or something like that, entrance into which should be considered an honour, conferred upon each scholar in presence of the whole school by the superintendent or some other official, for so many years' attendance as a scholar. The duties of this "Elder Scholars' Governing Union" should be to appoint from its numbers all officers, teachers, librarians, book stewards, visitors of absentee scholars, committee of management, &c., &c., and which should also consider any and all alterations in Sunday School work, rules, lessons, &c., &c. In this "Elder Scholars' Governing Union" there would thus be a class of officers ranging from that of book steward up to superintendent, or grand superintendent, if you wish to call him by that name. And as I have already mentioned the wearing of "regalia," each officer would be known by the difference of his "regalia." Promotion to the higher offices should only be obtainable after a certain length of service in the lower offices.

With regard to the girls, you might either admit them to the same "Elder Scholars' Governing Union," or you might establish a similar union for girls alone, which should have the management of all sewing classes for girls, the appointment of all those required to serve tea at soirees, &c., and other work that would no doubt come before them for consideration. Such a union I believe would be a great attraction to scholars, and would be considered by them as a great honour to belong to it.

But I must now hasten on to say something of such things as I deem, and all will deem, of greater honour than this. There is perhaps an oversight on the part of Sunday School promoters in the fact that they always concern themselves with what is done *inside* Sunday Schools, and forget that there is a life lived by every scholar outside Sunday Schools over which we all desire that the Sunday School shall have a great influence. Do you not think, therefore, that we ought to begin and take more notice of the week-day life of our scholars, and if there has anything transpired in the life of any scholar that is of special interest or value, between one Sunday and another, to take occasion to encourage that trait of character by special reference or reward? It seems to me that we are here missing a grand, and certainly one of the greatest, opportunities of training our young to be truly religious. We know not what good we might germinate or cause to be accomplished if we took more notice of the week-day life. For example, we might initiate a system of sick visitation amongst the scholars themselves, not necessarily involving the offering of prayer by the bedside, but perhaps only interesting them in the welfare of each other. For such good Christian work amongst the young, honours of a special kind might be bestowed by the school management. Say that you had tickets or checks to distribute amongst the scholars, one of which might be given in to the teacher or other official appointed to receive them every time a scholar made a visit to a sick friend, with the name of the scholar; then after a dozen of such checks had been registered against a scholar, or any number exceeding that that was thought reasonable, you might bestow an honour on that scholar, such as a certain coloured scarf, or perhaps a better honour still might be a medal representing the "Good Shepherd," and called a "Medal of the Good Shepherd." Likewise, when any scholar has especially befriended any person, not necessarily another scholar, or had been the means of saving life, or some such action been done by them, a medal representing the "Good Samaritan," and called "A Good Samaritan Medal," might be bestowed on that scholar.

In the same way scholars who have made good use of *spare time* as we call it, or of hours after daily work, in self-education, little inventions or such like work, a medal called "The Medal of the Faithful Servant" might be bestowed. I will not trouble you by further illustrating this idea, except by saying that it might be extended to temperance work. You see plainly enough what I mean. Some good would be certain to accrue from the recognition of such good service done by scholars, and we might raise up around us a band of earnest and virtuous young men and women who would be thus better prepared to enter, not only the more important service of the Church, but also for entering on the moral obligations and responsibilities of life.

All these honours thus obtained could be worn at soirees, anniversaries, school excursions, processions, &c. I believe we do not parade our Sunday School work and results as much as we should do. Other inferior societies are not afraid of parading, and I believe they gain to a certain extent by so doing. The Sunday School, I would say, is second to no society yet established, and if anything deserves encouragement it is this. What I have been advocating is one way of encouraging our young people to take more interest in their Sunday School. By forming the "Elder Scholars' Governing Union" which I have spoken of, you would thereby make it solely into a society of the young, attended by the young, who as they grow older become its only managers. This is what I think it ought to be. My paper is a very imperfect one, and contains many things which, if I had more time to think over, might have been omitted. But I give it to you as it comes from my pen, trusting that you will judge it in a generous spirit, and hoping that some good may result from these rambling remarks.

Rev. Mr. Dunkerley *(pastor loci)*, in opening the discussion upon the paper, expressed the opinion that prizes, badges, and outward-marks of honour were not desirable, but calculated to set up an aristocracy of the worst kind in the schools. He thought the children should be encouraged to work for some better object than the mere gaining of prizes.

The paper was also discussed by Messrs. M'Calmont, James Davidson, A K. Stewart, Bulmer, Drummond, and Rev. J. C. Street.

After a few words in reply from Mr. Lancaster, the meeting was brought to a close by hymn and benediction.

Most of the visitors, after partaking of tea, which was hospitably supplied by the Comber people, attended a service which was held in the Comber church. The addresses were delivered by Rev. T. Dunkerley, and Rev. J. C. Street.

The Annual Conference in connection with the Non-Subscribing Association was held on Thursday, September 24th, in the meeting-house of the old Presbyterian congregation, Larne. A large attendance of the clergy and laity of the Non-Subscribing Church, accompanied by a very considerable number of ladies, assembled on the occasion. Among those present there were:—Revs. Thos. Dunkerley, B.A., Comber, President of Non-Subscribing Association; C. J. M'Alester, David Gordon, William Napier, Moore Getty, David Thompson, T. H. M. Scott, M.A.; Alex. Gordon, M.A.; James Kennedy, Frederick Thomas, Joseph H. Bibby, Wm. Fielding, English Crooks, H. A. M'Gowan, Dendy Agate, B.A.; Wm. Wetherall, Belfast; Edgar S. Anthony, M.A.; Messrs. David Nelson, James Morrow, R. P. Lusk, Robert Bailey, Samuel Bailey, Alexander Fleming, John M'Ninch, James W. M'Ninch, Samuel M'Gill, Wm. Pinkerton, Wm. Hay, Francis Mechan, James Adrain, John M'Ninch, John Drummond, — Fielding, Malcolm Fleming, William Fleming, Paul Fleming, Wm. Bailey, Thomas Lusk, William Robert Nelson, Wm. Spackman, Robert King, — M'Kisack, David Pinkerton, &c., &c.

The Conference having been opened at four o'clock by a brief religious service by the Rev. C. J. M'Alester, the President of the Association (Rev. Thomas Dunkerley) took the chair.

The President, in a practical address, pointed out the object of the Conference, and then mentioned that the Sunday School Committee of the Association had arranged with the Rev. David Thompson, of Dromore, to introduce

the business of the Conference with a paper on "How to Improve our Sunday Schools." He would now call on Mr. Thompson to proceed with the reading of the paper he referred to.

The Rev. David Thompson passed in review the different agencies to be employed in advancing the work of the Sunday School. He pointed out the relation of the Sunday School to the Church; showed how the real object of the former was not the imparting of the rudiments of education, as reading, writing, and arithmetic, but the inculcation of right principles. Doctor Martineau had well said that religion was the consecration of life, and the work of the Sunday School, truly viewed, was to teach the young mind how to consecrate life. The reader then passed on to show that the Sunday School did not aim at taking the parent's place in imparting religious knowledge, but, inasmuch as parents did not co-operate in this religious field—and they should—there was ever urgent need for the earnest Sunday School teacher's work. What might seem to some insignificant obstacles in the way of the Sunday scholar, he showed had often a really prejudicial effect on the young mind. He alluded to torn and soiled books and shabby schoolrooms, and books in good condition, and clean, bright schoolrooms, pleasantly ornamented, should take the place of such. He pointed to teachers' meetings, bands of hope, literary societies, as all having their uses in connection with the Sunday School; but, whatever might be done by such aids, the true way to improve the Sunday School was ever to give it a religious significance. For this end teachers and all concerned should prepare, plan, and perform. Without the quickening religious spirit the Sunday School would never accomplish its true work or attain its end. In short, it could only become an efficient spiritual instrument when it led young hearts into the paths where God could be glorified and Christ could be served.

The President, having personally thanked Mr. Thompson for his able and excellent paper, called on the Rev. Moore Getty to open the discussion on the subject which had been brought before the Conference.

Mr. Getty reviewed the various positions taken up by Mr. Thompson in a brief address.

The Rev. Dendy Agate followed, referring in complimentary terms to the paper just read, and pointing to the encouragement which Sunday School teachers should receive in keeping before them what the Rev. B. Herford had rightly called "the bright side of Sunday School work." It was important also that new teachers should all be impressed with and shown the true religious character of their work, and also that it should ever be the object of the Sunday School teacher not alone to instruct the children under his care, but to interest them. It was not fair, it was not honest, to bring children to a Sunday School and permit them to remain uninterested in the work set before them.

Rev. C. J. M'Alester gave a sketch of the plan pursued by himself in his Sunday School in teaching the section of the school in his immediate charge.

Revs. James Kennedy, T. H. M. Scott, Alex. Gordon, J. H. Bibby, David Gordon, William Napier, Messrs. John Smyth, jun., M.A., Banbridge, and William Spackman, Belfast, followed with brief addresses on the way which appeared to each most efficacious in promoting the cause of the Sunday School.

The President having summed up the work of the meeting,

Mr. Thompson replied to the various speakers on his paper.

Rev. James Kennedy, minister of the Larne Congregation, announced the concluding hymn, and, having pronounced the benediction, a Conference felt by all to be profitable and cheering was brought to a close.

After the meeting the Larne Congregation hospitably entertained the members of the Conference and other friends at an elegant and substantial tea in their commodious schoolhouse, which had been tastefully renovated for the occasion.

Rosemary Street Mutual Improvement Association.

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FOURTEENTH SESSION, 1885-86.

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The Committee have much pleasure in announcing the following

PROGRAMME UNTIL CHRISTMAS, 1885.

1885.
Oct. 5.—Opening Soiree.
„ 12.—Lecture: "A Political Programme for Progressive Reformers." Rev. J. C. Street.
„ 19.—Paper: "An Historic Emblem Flower—The Daisy." Mr. John Vinycomb.
„ 26.—Paper: "Charles Dickens." Mr. J. D. Stuart.
Nov. 2.—Paper: "The Linen Trade." Mr. W. J. Roche.
„ 9.—Lecture: "The Immortality of the Soul in the Hebrew Scriptures." Rev. Edwin Collins.
„ 16.—Paper: "The Progress of Democracy." Mr. S. Millin.
„ 23.—Music and Readings.
„ 30.—Paper: "Life." Mr. William Beck.
Dec. 7.—Lecture: "John Ruskin: a Sketch of his Life and Work." Rev. J. H. Bibby.
„ 14.—Miscellaneous Original Compositions.
„ 21.—Paper: "The Fallacies of (so-called) Fair Trade." Mr. Alexander Bowman.

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The intellectual and moral advancement of its Members, and the furtherance of acquaintance and fellowship among them.

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ADMISSION—To Lectures and Discussions, Members, Free; Non-Members, Sixpence each. To Papers, and Music and Readings—Free.

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Contributions in aid of the *Chronicle and Index* will be gladly received and acknowledged by the Rev. J. C. Street.

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